

Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element

Introduction

This element combines two state-mandated elements, conservation and open space, and an optional recreation component into one comprehensive element. The Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element specifies objectives, policies, and programs to achieve the permanent preservation and management of public open space lands, natural resources, and the enhancement of community recreational opportunities.

The open space portion of the element addresses open space acquisition and management, preservation of agricultural lands, and citywide open space opportunities in the form of Open Space Planning Areas. Conservation addresses topics such as waterways, natural and riparian habitats, wildlife preservation, and scenic, historic and cultural resources conservation. Recreation topics include neighborhood, community and regional parks and trails in open space areas surrounding the city.

In addition to this Element, policies for open space, conservation, and recreation in the Benicia/Fairfield/Vallejo Buffer Area (Open Space Planning Area 1) are also contained in the Tri-City and County Cooperative Plan for Agriculture and Open Space Preservation, an optional element to the Fairfield General Plan.

Goal

The goal of the Open Space, Conservation, and Recreation Element is:

Designate, preserve, and protect agricultural, ecological, recreational and scenic lands in Fairfield and surrounding areas for now and future generations.

Objectives, Policies, and Programs

Open Space

Objective OS 1

Support preservation of existing agricultural lands. (See Policy LU 2.1 and Objective ED 8)

Policy OS 1.1

Preserve agricultural enterprises by supporting right-to-farm policies, and separating and buffering agricultural lands from new development areas. (See Policy AG 1.1)

Policy OS 1.2

Provide economic support for permanent commitment to agricultural uses. (See Policy AG 1.2)

Program OS 1.2 A

Provide economic supports for growers: low interest loans, farmers markets, tax reforms, and water subsidies, in exchange for long term commitment to agricultural use. (See Policy ED 8.1 and AG 1.2 A)

Program OS 1.2 B

Support county agricultural preserve program and a strong county right-to-farm ordinance. (See Policy AG 1.2 B)

Program OS 1.2 C

Encourage development of agriculture processing and handling industries. (See Policy AG 1.2 C)

Policy OS 1.3

Maintain current agricultural zoning in the area east of Travis AFB, including the Jepson Prairie. (See Policy AG 1.3)

Policy OS 1.4

Permanently preserve productive agricultural lands within the Suisun Valley by continuing to direct new urban development away from the Suisun Valley. (See Policy LU 2.1, AG 1.4 and ED 8.3)

Program OS 1.4 A

Establish a permanent agricultural buffer between urban development in Fairfield and agriculture in the Suisun Valley. The City will seek to establish such a buffer through the acquisition of fee title, development rights, or conservation easements. The City may choose to lease back to farmers any lands acquired by the City. (See Policy LU 2.1)

Policy OS 1.5

Strongly reaffirm the City of Fairfield's commitment to the basic goals of the 1974 "Solano Irrigation District Agreement," actively participate in any local measures that promote the preservation of agriculture adjacent to Fairfield, and encourage extension of the agreement past its present expiration date. (See Policy AG 1.5)

Policy OS 1.6

What is urban shall be municipal, and what is rural shall be within the County. Any urban development requiring basic municipal services shall occur only within the incorporated City and within the urban limit line established by the General Plan. (See Objective LU 3, AG 1.6 and Policy LU 3.1)

Objective OS 2

Create a greenbelt/open space buffer around the perimeter of the city that provides a clear sense of identity for the City of Fairfield as separate from other urban areas and incorporates the hills, the Jepson Prairie, and the Suisun Marsh. (See Policy LU 2.4)

Policy OS 2.1

All future Master Plans shall include adequate provisions for incorporating open space buffers. View corridors, watersheds, and prominent ridges shall be protected, and development on unstable soils shall be discouraged. (See Objective UD 5)

Policy OS 2.2

Establish and maintain open space buffer zones between Vallejo and Fairfield along I-80 and between Fairfield and Benicia along I-680, identified as Open Space Planning Area 1 on the Open Space Planning Area map.

Policy OS 2.3

All land uses and activities in Open Space Planning Area 1, also known as the Benicia/Fairfield/Vallejo Buffer as shown in Exhibit OS-1, shall conform to the policies contained in the Tri-City and County Cooperative Plan for Agriculture and Open Space Preservation.

Policy OS 2.4

Preserve open space and agricultural lands in Green Valley.

Policy OS 2.5

Establish a permanent open space buffer between Fairfield and Vacaville consistent with the Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt Study Committee Report and Recommendations of May 9, 1991.

Program OS 2.5 A

Establish and maintain an ongoing cooperative open space implementation program with the City of Vacaville.

Policy OS 2.6

Maximize open space preserved to enhance City identity and preserve surrounding natural environments. (See Objective UD 5)

Objective OS 3

Maximize public open space with minimum management. (See Objective LU 7)

Policy OS 3.1

Open Space dedications shall provide a plan for funding to insure that financing for interim maintenance is provided.

Policy OS 3.2

Ownership and management responsibility of public open space shall be assigned to the agency/organization best suited to meeting this responsibility. Adequate security of open space shall be provided to insure that applicable laws and regulations are enforced.

Program OS 3.2 A

Implement the City's adopted Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan.

Policy OS 3.3

Residents, property owners, and users shall contribute to maintaining public open spaces.

Objective OS 4

Maximize open space through appropriate acquisition mechanisms. (See Objective LU 7)

Policy OS 4.1

New development shall fund its share of open space.

Policy OS 4.2

Require dedication of open space lands for development projects in the Fairfield/Vacaville Greenbelt Open Space Planning Area in the northeastern area of Fairfield.

Policy OS 4.3

All future areawide plans shall include appropriate mechanisms for acquisition of open space.

Policy OS 4.4

An equitable balance shall be sought between development density and open space to be preserved.

Policy OS 4.5

Promote clustering of housing units to preserve the hillsides, ridges, and a maximum amount of open space. (See Policy LU 13.1 and Policy UD 5.3)

Policy OS 4.6

Utilize development projects as a means for permanently preserving open space by encouraging mechanisms such as land pooling and transfer of development rights within Open Space Planning Areas for the preservation of significant open space features and lands.

Program OS 4.6 A

Require dedication of appropriate open space land or development rights as a condition of approval for proposed development projects.

Program OS 4.6 B

Establish a method for permanent preservation of open space acquired through a land pooling program. Such designations shall be registered on the property title and shall be maintained should the property be sold.

Objective OS 5

Generate funds within the community for acquisition and management of open space lands.

Policy OS 5.1

A study shall be conducted by staff to identify, analyze, and establish open space funding mechanisms.

Policy OS 5.2

Through one or more of the following programs, generate funds for acquisition and management of open space.

Program OS 5.2 A

Establish Mello-Roos or Marks-Roos financing districts and programs for areas of proposed development to preserve open spaces.

Program OS 5.2 B

Impose an annual bond repayment property tax at an appropriate level for public open space purposes on all new Fairfield residences.

Program OS 5.2 C

Impose an annual parcel tax on existing homes and properties not currently subject to open space assessments. These monies shall be used primarily to maintain public open spaces and associated recreational programs.

Program OS 5.2 D

Revise the bedroom tax to generate a net increase in total revenues for open space funding.

Policy OS 5.3

Place appropriate funding mechanisms on the local ballot.

Conservation

Objective OS 6

Enhance visual resources throughout the City. (See Objectives LU 15, LU 16, and UD 5 and Policies UD 5.1, UD 5.2, and UD 5.3)

Policy OS 6.1

Preserve the views of hills and other vistas surrounding Fairfield. (See Policy UD 5.2 and Policy HS 4.7)

Policy OS 6.2

Continue to administer adopted preservation ordinances for trees, streams and hillside development. (See Policy UD 5.3)

Policy OS 6.3

Require master planning approaches to regulate future developments within designated Open Space Planning Areas.

Program OS 6.3 A

Require studies that document slope suitability and grading requirements as a condition of approval for development projects impacting open space areas.

Policy OS 6.4

All grading shall be integrated and compatible with adjacent areas so as to create a natural topographical appearance and avoid abrupt changes in slope.

Program OS 6.4 A

Grading in hillside areas shall comply with the adopted Hillside Grading Ordinance. (See Policy HS 2.4 and Program HS 2.4 A)

Policy OS 6.5

New development within a Scenic Vista Area or its viewshed shall comply with the policies and guidelines in the Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan. (See Objective UD 5)

Policy OS 6.6

Significant natural features shall be preserved wherever development is allowed in a Scenic Vista Area, and views of these significant features shall not be obstructed.

Policy OS 6.7

New development along a Scenic Roadway shall comply with the policies and guidelines in the Scenic Vistas and Roadways Plan.

Program OS 6.7 A

Develop public trails along scenic roadways within the Planning Area. Establish design guidelines for such trails.

Policy OS 6.8

Preserve the character of Nelson Hill through establishment of open space/recreation in conjunction with development projects. (See LU Nelson Hill Policies 4, 5, 6, and 7)

Policy OS 6.9

Maintain the scenic vistas of the rolling hills that are seen from the urban areas of Fairfield.

Policy OS 6.10

The Cordelia Commons development (generally located to the west of Nelson Hill, north of Cordelia Road and east of Dan Wilson Creek) shall include public open space on Lookout Hill and preserve the marsh area and significant cultural resources. (See LU Nelson Hill Policy 11)

Policy OS 6.11

Permanently preserve open space above the 200 foot contour on Cement Hill because of its dominant visual significance to the City. If the City ultimately acquires this open space, it shall develop publicly accessible trails and vista points on Cement Hill to take advantage of the outstanding views of Fairfield and the Valley.

Program OS 6.11 A

Seek development rights, fee title, or conservation easements to lands on Cement Hill in exchange for future development approvals on developable lands below the 200 foot contour.

Objective OS 7

Identify and protect sensitive resources.

Policy OS 7.1

Establish policies to protect indigenous wildlife and their habitats. Support the Solano County Water Agency Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) preparation effort and, if the HCP is approved and adopted, implement its requirements.

Program OS 7.1 A

Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for annual grassland wildlife habitat during any areawide planning process. The plan should identify sites for habitat preservation and enhancement and establish predictable mitigation requirements for developers, mitigation funding mechanisms, and interagency agreements on mitigation measures and priorities. Preparation of the plan would include tasks described in the 1992 General Plan EIR.

Program OS 7.1 B

For each proposed development site containing riparian, oak woodland, oak savanna, annual grassland, agricultural lands, and wetlands that potentially support special-status raptor nests or habitat, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 C

For each proposed development site within a riparian, grassland, or Oak Savannah biological community, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their

habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as need, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 D

If elderberry shrubs are found during implementation of Policy OS 7.1, the project proponent will refer to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service conservation guidelines for the valley elderberry longhorn beetle (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service 1999). If it is determined that impacts cannot be avoided by maintaining distance requirements as specified in the guidelines, the project proponent will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act (or Section 10 if the project does not involve a federal action). Under Section 7, the consultation will require the preparation of a biological assessment, development of a compensation plan according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines, and, on approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, authorization to take valley elderberry longhorn beetle in the form of a Section 7 biological opinion. If no federal action is involved, the project proponent will prepare an Habitat Conservation Plan under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

Program OS 7.1 E

For each proposed development site containing aquatic habitats, including ponds, canals, creeks, or other drainages or water bodies that potentially support California red-legged frog, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive

resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 F

If aquatic habitats, including ponds, canals, creeks, or other drainages or water bodies that potentially support California red-legged frog are found in a project area during implementation of Program OS 7.1E, the project proponent must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act (or Section 10 if the project involves a federal action). The consultation could result in additional protocol surveys using U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey guidelines and could require the preparation of a biological assessment, development of a compensation plan according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines, and, on approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, authorization to take the California red-legged frog in the form of a Section 7 biological opinion. If no federal action is involved, the project proponent will prepare a habitat conservation plan under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

Program OS 7.1 G

For each proposed development site containing aquatic habitats, including vernal pools and other seasonal wetlands, ponds, canals, creeks, or other drainages or water bodies that potentially support California tiger salamander, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1H

For each proposed development site containing riparian habitats, or ponds, canals, creeks, or other drainages or water bodies that potentially support foothill yellow-legged frog or northwestern pond turtle, the City will require qualified biologists to identify and map all sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats; using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible; and flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 I

If aquatic habitats, including ponds, creeks, or other drainages or water bodies that potentially support foothill yellow-legged frog or western pond turtle are found in a project area during implementation of program OS 7.1H, the project proponent will, to the extent feasible, avoid direct and indirect impacts on these habitats by prohibiting construction or related activities in these habitats and establishing a minimum 200-foot-wide no-activity buffer surrounding these habitats. If impacts cannot be avoided, the project proponent will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game to develop appropriate mitigation to offset impacts on these species and their habitats.

Program OS 7.1 J

For each proposed development site containing grasslands, brushlands, woodlands, and chaparral with sandy or loose soils, and abundant ant colonies for foraging that potentially support California horned lizard, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 K

If upland habitats, including grasslands, brushlands, woodlands, and chaparral that potentially support California horned lizard are found in a project area during implementation of Program OS 7.1J, the project proponent will, to the extent feasible, avoid direct and indirect impacts on these habitats. Additional surveys may be conducted to determine presence or absence of this species in the planning area. If it is determined the species is not present on the planning area or on habitat adjacent and contiguous with the planning area, no further mitigation is required. If the species is present, the project proponent will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game to develop appropriate mitigation to offset impacts on this species and its habitat.

Program OS 7.1 L

If special-status raptors nests are found on or in the vicinity of a project area through implementation of Program 7.1B, the project proponent will consult with the California Department of Fish and Game to develop appropriate site-specific mitigation strategies to avoid impacts on active nests. Active raptor nests are protected under the California Fish and Game Code, Section 3503.5. Mitigation measures could include establishing protective buffer zones, timing restrictions, or compensation through acquisition of replacement nesting habitat.

Program OS 7.1 M

If nesting Swainson's hawks are found on or in the vicinity of a project area through implementation of Program OS 7.1B or if known nests are identified through other sources (e.g., the California Natural Diversity Database) within 10 miles of the planning area, the project proponent will mitigate for losses of annual grassland and agricultural foraging habitat using the current California Department of Fish and Game mitigation guidelines for Swainson's hawk (California Department of Fish and Game 1994).

Program OS 7.1 N

For each proposed development site containing grasslands and agricultural habitats along field edges and ruderal habitats that potentially support western burrowing owl, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and

Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 O

If active burrowing owl nesting or wintering burrows are found on or in the vicinity of a project area through implementation of Program OS 7.1N, the project proponent will implement the California Department of Fish and Game mitigation guidelines for burrowing owls (California Department of Fish and Game 1995).

Program OS 7.1 P

For each proposed development site containing riparian areas that potentially support great egret, snowy egret, great blue heron, or black-crowned night heron rookeries, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 Q

If heron or egret rookeries are found on or in the vicinity of a project area through implementation of Program OS 7.1P, the City will require the project proponent to consult with the California Department of Fish and Game to develop appropriate site-specific mitigation strategies to avoid impacts on active colonies. These could include establishing no-disturbance buffers, timing restrictions, or habitat compensation.

Program OS 7.1 R

For each proposed development site containing freshwater or saltwater marsh, or upland sites with blackberries, nettles, thistles, and grain fields that potentially support tricolored blackbird nesting colonies, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive

Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 S

If tricolored blackbird nesting colonies are found on or in the vicinity of a project area through implementation of Program OS 7.1R, the City shall require the project proponent to consult with the California Department of Fish and Game to develop appropriate site-specific mitigation strategies to avoid impacts on active colonies. These could include establishing no-disturbance buffers, timing restrictions, or habitat compensation.

Program OS 7.1 T

For each proposed development site containing saltwater marsh, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.1 U

If habitat for saltwater marsh special-status species is found on or in the vicinity of a project area through implementation of Program OS 7.1T, the City shall require the project proponent to consult with the California Department of Fish and Game and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to determine the potential for state or federally threatened or endangered species or state fully protected species (e.g., salt marsh harvest mouse, California clapper rail, and black rail). If potential for these species exists,

then the project proponent will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 10 or 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act and with the California Department of Fish and Game to determine the potential effects of the proposed project on these species. The project proponent will prepare the appropriate state and federal environmental documentation that could ultimately result in authorization to take 1 or more threatened or endangered species under the federal Endangered Species Act and through a California Department of Fish and Game Section 2081 permit process. No take authorization is available for fully protected species, and consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game would be required to develop approved avoidance measures.

Program OS 7.1 V

If aquatic habitats, including vernal pools and other seasonal wetlands, ponds, creeks, and other drainages or water bodies that potentially support California tiger salamander are found in a project area during implementation of Program OS 7.1G, the project proponent will consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the federal Endangered Species Act (or Section 10 if the project involves a federal action). The consultation could result in additional protocol surveys using U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service survey guidelines and could require the preparation of a biological assessment, development of a compensation plan according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines, and, on acceptance by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, authorization to take the California red-legged frog in the form of a Section 7 biological opinion. If no federal action is involved, the project proponent will prepare a habitat conservation plan under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

Policy OS 7.2

Work with the County to preserve Green Valley Falls as a nature reserve. Plan for limited public access in the environmentally sensitive areas of the Green Valley canyon.

Policy OS 7.3

Work with the County to ensure that development projects within the Rockville Hills/Stoneridge Open Space Planning Area to achieve minimal alteration of existing land contours and natural drainage channels.

Policy OS 7.4

Provide for the permanent protection of wildlife habitat areas.

Policy OS 7.5

Identify and protect vernal pools located in the entire General Plan Area. For vernal pools located in the Technology Park and Travis Reserve, establish a habitat reserve similar to the Jepson Prairie Nature Preserve.

Program OS 7.5 A

Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for vernal pools and seasonal wetland habitats during the preparation of required areawide plans. The components of this program are described in the 1992 General Plan EIR.

Program OS 7.5 B

For each proposed development site containing vernal pool or seasonal wetland biological communities, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, and make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 7.5 C

If vernal pools or other seasonal wetlands that potentially support federally listed invertebrates are found in a project area during implementation of Program 7.5B, the project proponent must consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under Section 7 of the federal ESA (or Section 10 if the project does not involve a federal action). The consultation could result in additional protocol-level surveys to determine the presence or absence of the species and could require the preparation of a biological assessment, development of a compensation plan according to U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service guidelines, and, on approval by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, authorization to take federally listed invertebrates in the form of a Section 7 biological opinion. If no federal action is involved, the project proponent will prepare a habitat conservation plan under Section 10 of the federal Endangered Species Act.

Policy OS 7.6

Avoid the potential negative impacts of increased human activity on sensitive habitat areas when establishing new recreational facilities or programs.

Program OS 7.6 A

Prepare guidelines for approval by the Open Space Commission and Community Services Commission for human use of habitat areas.

Policy OS 7.7

Promote the preservation of existing mature trees and encourage the planting of appropriate shade trees in new developments. (See Policy UD 6.1 and Program UD 6.1 A)

Program OS 7.7 A

Require the planting of shade trees in new residential and commercial developments per the standards established in the Zoning Ordinance.

Program OS 7.7 B

Adopt a conservation plan and mitigation banking program for oak savannah and oak woodland habitat during any areawide planning process. The plan should identify habitat preservation and enhancement sites and criteria for incorporating and protecting oak savannah habitat and individual valley oaks as part of development projects, and would establish predictable mitigation requirements for developers, mitigation funding mechanisms, and interagency agreements on mitigation measures and priorities. Preparation of the plan would include tasks described in the 1992 General Plan EIR.

Policy OS 7.8

For each proposed development site within oak woodland or oak savannah biological communities, the City will require qualified biologists to identify and map all sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as defined above) and their habitats; using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible; and flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program 7.8 A

The loss of healthy oak trees of all age classes should be avoided or reduced to the extent feasible for each development site. Prior to consideration of any development proposal for the site, the City shall require a botanist to identify and map project-site trees, noting the dbh, and will make recommendations for avoidance. If necessary, a certified arborist may be hired to document the health status of oak trees on the

project site. The botanist will coordinate placement of protective temporary fencing outside of the driplines of oak trees to be preserved.

Program 7.8 B

For each project in which unavoidable removal of oak woodland or savanna will occur, the City shall require the development of a compensation plan. Compensation will consist of tree planting (preferably onsite) or purchase and preservation of existing woodland or savanna. The City will develop required compensation ratios for removed oak trees, consistent with its Tree Conservation Ordinance and require compliance with the compensation plan. Where native oak trees are to be removed, the conservation plan shall provide for replacement with native oak trees, unless native species that are appropriate for the replanting site are not readily available from commercial sources. In this case, non-native species may be approved.

Policy OS 7.9

Promote the protection of special status plant populations. Programs OS 7.9 A – 7.9 C should be applied to the mitigation of special-status plant species, but should be superceded when strategies in the City's Habitat Conservation Plan are developed and approved..

Program OS 7.9 A

The City shall require project proponents within undeveloped lands to retain a qualified botanist to conduct surveys of proposed project sites to identify special-status plant species. If survey results identify potential habitat for special-status plants, blooming period surveys will be conducted for all potentially present special-status plants. All locations of special-status plants will be identified on maps.

Program OS 7.9 B

Special-status plants, especially federally listed species, will be avoided by construction activities wherever feasible. Prior to beginning construction, the plants and a minimum buffer size to be determined on a case-by-case basis for each project site will be fenced and protected throughout construction.

Program OS 7.9 C

If complete avoidance of a special-status plant is not feasible, the impact will be reduced to the extent possible and the unavoidable loss will be compensated. The City will require the project proponent to retain a qualified botanist to develop a mitigation plan. Depending on the legal status of the plant species (i.e., listing under the federal ESA or CESA), the California Department of Fish and Game or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service will be consulted before preparation of the mitigation plan. The mitigation plan should include a description and map of mitigation sites,

methods to be used; management techniques for the sites; and sources of funding to purchase, manage, and preserve the sites. Mitigation could include purchase of an existing offsite area known to support the special-status species to be affected, as well as preserving the site in perpetuity. Transplanting and/or reseeding of special-status plants is not a proven effective compensation method for most species; therefore, project proponents should avoid special-status plants for which transplanting techniques have not been proven or compensate for impacts by preserving another population.

Policy OS 7.10

Promote the prevention of the spread of noxious weeds.

Program OS 7.10 A

The City will require project proponents to hire a qualified botanist to identify and map noxious weed infestation areas before construction activities. The botanist will contact the Solano County Agricultural Commissioner to identify any current noxious weeds of concern in the county. Infestation areas will be avoided by construction activities, if feasible.

Objective OS 8

Preserve and protect natural resources.

Policy OS 8.1

Mitigate air pollution from fixed and vehicular sources as required by state and regional air quality plans and programs. (See Policy LU 13.2 and Objective CI 12)

Program OS 8.1 A

Develop and adopt an air quality element or equivalent ordinance.

Policy OS 8.2

Work with surrounding communities to develop regional solutions to air quality issues. (See Objective LU 5, Policy LU 5.1, and Policy CI 12.1)

Policy OS 8.3

Encourage more efficient use of private vehicles and increased use of mass transit and alternative transportation modes. (See Objectives CI 6 and CI 7 and Policy CI 12.4)

Policy OS 8.4

Encourage the retrofitting of existing buildings to be energy efficient. (See Objective HO 8)

Policy OS 8.5

Require water conservation and energy efficiency techniques to be incorporated into the design of all development projects. (See Policy UD 6.2 and Policy PF 4.8)

Policy OS 8.6

Support recycling activities throughout the City. (See Policy PF 13.1 and Program PF 13.1 A)

Program OS 8.6 A *Continue to implement the City's household curbside recycling program. (See Program PF 13.1 A)*

Policy OS 8.7

Encourage the use of recycled water where feasible.

Objective OS 9

Maintain existing waterways in their natural state if possible.

Policy OS 9.1

Promote restoration and establish permanent mechanisms to protect wetlands and riparian corridors.

Policy OS 9.2

Manage all seasonal creeks and other drainage courses so as to protect and enhance the Suisun Marsh. (See Policy PF 8.4 A)

Policy OS 9.3

Secure wetlands designation for appropriate lands in the Fairfield/Vacaville Greenbelt and for lands in the Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie Planning Area.

Program OS 9.3 A

Support the establishment of a regional or State wildlife preserve within the Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie Open Space Planning Area that will complement the existing Jepson Prairie Reserve.

Policy OS 9.4

Allow no development on the east side of I-680 between Parish Road and the Cordelia historic area.

Policy OS 9.5

Support acquisition of key parcels on the periphery of the Suisun Marsh to ensure the integrity of the entire marsh.

Policy OS 9.6

Continue to endorse the integrity of the Suisun Marsh Secondary Management Zone.

Policy OS 9.7

Promote only low intensity recreational activities which are compatible with the marsh environment adjacent to Suisun Marsh.

Policy OS 9.8

Preserve natural water courses through requirements of land dedication and open space improvement imposed during the land development process.

Policy OS 9.9

The proponents of new development projects along important freshwater marsh, riparian, or open water habitat areas that are not already covered by the City's Creekside Protection Ordinance shall provide an assessment of the habitat. Based on the assessment, an enhancement or restoration plan would be required to be prepared by a qualified person(s) experienced in the development and implementation of riparian restoration and enhancement plans.

Program OS 9.9 A

For each proposed development site within freshwater marsh, salt marsh, vernal pool, and seasonal wetland biological communities, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed to map the resources and, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 9.9 B

The loss of freshwater marsh, salt marsh, and vernal pool/seasonal wetland habitat and of stream channel and open-water habitats will be avoided or reduced to the extent feasible for each development site. Within each proposed development or agricultural conversion site, the project wetland ecologist will delineate and map waters of the United States and isolated wetland and open-water habitats and will make recommendations for avoidance. The wetland ecologist will coordinate placement of protective temporary fencing around wetland, stream channel, and open-water habitat to be preserved. Erosion control measures will be implemented at the edges of graded areas to minimize potential release of sediments into adjacent avoided wetland, stream channel, and open-water habitats.

Program OS 9.9 C

The City shall require the project proponent to obtain all necessary permits pertaining to affected waters of the United States, including wetland habitat and stream channel and pond habitat regulated by the California Department of Fish and Game and/or San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board prior to construction. Grading or other construction activities within streambeds or ponds may require an streambed alteration agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game. Discharge of fill into waters of the United States will require a Clean Water Act Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and Clean Water Act Section 401 certification from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. The permitting process will also require compensation for construction impacts.

Program OS 9.9 D

For each project in which unavoidable removal of wetland habitat or other waters of the United States will occur, the City shall require the project proponent to develop a compensation plan prior to construction. Compensation may include purchase of mitigation credits for the affected habitat types at an established mitigation bank, if available; preservation, and possibly enhancement, of in-kind habitat types; or creation and preservation of in-kind habitat types. Required mitigation ratios will be developed on a case-by-case basis in coordination with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Department of Fish and Game, and/or U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (for wetlands that are occupied by federally listed species).

Program OS 9.9 E

For each proposed development site within a riparian habitat biological community, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, to map the resources and, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game, make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Program OS 9.9 F

For each proposed development site affecting a stream channel or open water biological communities, the City will require qualified biologists to conduct a reconnaissance survey of the site and identify potential sensitive biological resources, including special-status species (as identified in the 2001 EIR for the Comprehensive Amendment to the General Plan) and their habitats, jurisdictional waters of the United States, and any other protected biological resources. If no sensitive biological resources are found during this survey, no further surveys will be necessary.

If sensitive biological resources are found, the biologist will conduct additional surveys, as needed, to map the resources and, using methods and protocols developed or acceptable by the USFWS and CDFG, make recommendations for avoiding sensitive biological resources to the extent feasible. The biologist will also flag or fence sensitive resources to be avoided. This requirement shall apply prior to City consideration of any development proposal for the site.

Policy OS 9.10

Avoid or reduce the loss of riparian habitat to the extent feasible for each development site.

Program OS 9.10 A

For each proposed development within a riparian habitat biological community, and prior to consideration of development proposals, the City shall require a botanist to identify and map riparian habitat and make recommendations for avoidance. The botanist will coordinate placement of protective temporary fencing around riparian habitat to be preserved.

Program OS 9.10 B

The City shall require the project proponent to obtain all necessary permits pertaining to affected riparian habitat within the planning area prior to allowing development. Removal of riparian habitat may require a streambed alteration agreement from the California Department of Fish and Game and may require a Section 404 permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and federal Clean Water Act, Section 401, certification from the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board. The permitting process will also require compensation for riparian impacts.

Program OS 9.10 C

For each project in which unavoidable removal of riparian habitat will occur, the City shall require the project proponent to develop a riparian habitat compensation plan. Compensation will consist of plantings, preferably onsite, or purchase and preservation of existing riparian habitat. The City will develop required compensation ratios for removed riparian vegetation in coordination with the California Department of Fish and Game, or the California Department of Fish and Game may require

specific compensation for a site through the streambed alteration agreement.

Objective OS 10

Preserve and establish cultural and historic resources.

Policy OS 10.1

Conserve valuable resources by promoting educational activities and encouraging conservation efforts by citizens, property owners, and builders.

Policy OS 10.2

Assign to the Open Space Commission the responsibility for the official inventory of historical and archeological sites.

Policy OS 10.3

Consult with the California Archaeological Inventory Northwest Information Center at Sonoma State University on any project that could have an impact on cultural resources.

Policy OS 10.4

Avoid impacts on cultural resources when archeological studies reveal the presence of cultural resources at a development site. If avoidance is infeasible, require site testing by a qualified archeologist to determine the significance of the resources, and implement recommended mitigation measures.

Policy OS 10.5

Halt construction at a development site if cultural resources are encountered unexpectedly during construction and require consultation with a qualified archeologist to determine the significance of the resources.

Policy OS 10.6

Promote a museum or education center to build awareness of our area's history and resources.

Policy OS 10.7

Require archeological studies by a qualified archeologist (as defined by the Secretary of the Interior's standards) in areas of archeological significance prior to approval of development projects.

Policy OS 10.8

Prepare and maintain an inventory of historic structures within the General Plan Area per the City's adopted Historic Preservation Ordinance and, where appropriate, promote the inclusion of these structures on the California Register of Historic Resources and the National Register of Historic Places. Work with property owners in seeking registration of historical structures as State Historic Landmarks or listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Program OS 10.8 A

The City shall require that a qualified architectural historian inventory and evaluate the significance of buildings and structures located in or adjacent to parcels before approval of development projects. Information of resources found to be eligible for listing on the California Register of Historic Resources should be provided to the Open Space Commission for inclusion on their inventory of historic structures.

Policy OS 10.9

Promote the preservation and restoration of historical sites and structures within the General Plan Area that are significant to the City's or the region's cultural or historic background. (See Policy UD 3.4)

Program OS 10.9 A

Implement the City's Historic Preservation Ordinance.

Recreation**Objective OS 11**

Maximize public value from open space for recreational uses. (See Objective LU 6)

Policy OS 11.1

Secure public access to open space to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy OS 11.2

Promote trail systems through the open spaces, and pedestrian/bicycle links throughout the City, per the adopted Master Trails Plan. (See Objective CI 9, Policies CI 9.1 and CI 9.2, and Program CI 9.2 A)

Policy OS 11.3

Require recreation and trails programs as a condition of approval for future development projects. Plans should provide access to trail heads located on adjacent public lands.

Policy OS 11.4

Actively participate with other governmental entities (cities, county, state, and federal) or agencies in the acquisition, management, and use of recreational/open space lands and facilities of mutual interest. (See Policy LU 5.3 and Program LU 5.3 A)

Program OS 11.4 A

Actively promote ridgetop and hillside trails along major north-south ridges connecting Benicia and eastern Vallejo, and between Benicia and Green Valley to become major links to the Bay Area Ridge Trail System.

Program OS 11.4 B

Actively promote trails for hikers, bicyclists, and equestrians in the Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes Planning Area that link the reservoirs, Green Valley Falls, Lower Green Valley, and the Rockville Hills area.

Policy OS 11.5

Where a project involves potential open space, natural resource reserves, or recreational lands of interest to more than one entity, the City shall work cooperatively with the other involved agencies. (See Policy LU 5.3 and Program LU 5.3 A)

Program OS 11.5 A

Identify and promote potential shared arrangements for owning, improving, and managing open space/conservation/recreational areas of mutual interest. This may include:

- joint powers agreements.*
- transfer of development rights.*
- shared ownership of open space areas.*
- shared management responsibilities.*
- joint funding programs.*
- memoranda of understanding.*

Policy OS 11.6

Maintain water courses within the General Plan Area as components of the recreation corridor system. Public access within sensitive habitat areas of waterway shall be considered individually to ensure protection of the habitat resource.

Program OS 11.6 A

Develop a program for establishing pedestrian, bicycle, and equestrian trails with frequent access points along the urban stream corridors.

Policy OS 11.7

Preserve public access corridors for walkers, bicyclists, and equestrians along future floodway improvement projects whenever feasible.

Policy OS 11.8

Utility easement corridors shall be designated for recreational open space unless an acceptable trail alternative is included in a development plan.

Objective OS 12

Develop park areas to serve the needs of all residents.

Policy OS 12.1

Develop park lands at the local and community levels to meet the recreational needs of current and future Fairfield residents.

Policy OS 12.2

Update and adopt a Parks, Open Space, Leisure, and Cultural Services Plan that identifies potential programs and recreation facility improvements for the Fairfield community. The city should examine funding sources to enable the city to meet its parkland-per-population standards by buildout of the general plan and provide for reestablishment and renovation of aging park facilities.

Program OS 12.2 A

Annually review the Parks, Open Space, Leisure, and Cultural Services Plan in conjunction with the capital improvements program and the annual budget cycle to identify projects for funding and implementation. Annually assess progress in attaining parkland-per-population standards and use that information to adjust funding and/or parkland dedication standards, if necessary.

Policy OS 12.3

Establish neighborhood parks of approximately five to seven acres at a ratio of 1.5 acres of usable park land per 1,000 residents throughout the City. Neighborhood parks are intended to serve a 1/2 mile radius area.

Policy OS 12.4

Establish community parks of approximately 40 acres at a ratio of two acres usable park lands per 1,000 residents throughout the City. Community parks are intended to serve a two mile radius.

Policy OS 12.5

Establish regional parks to meet regional open space and recreation needs.

Program OS 12.5 A

Develop a regional park in the Rancho Solano North Master Plan Area similar to the Rockville Hills Park. (See Rancho Solano North Policy 11)

Policy OS 12.6

Develop a new recreational and outdoor cultural complex for softball, soccer, picnicking, and outdoor cultural events.

Policy OS 12.7

Preserve and develop the entire Linear Park system, from Solano Community College into the Peabody Walters Master Plan area, as illustrated on the Land Use Diagram, exclusively as a recreation facility in order to provide an alternative non-motorized vehicular linkage among recreation and parks, schools, shopping, industry, residential, and other community activity centers.

Program OS 12.7 A

Grant a conservation easement to an eligible non-profit corporation to protect the Linear Park from non-recreational uses.

Supporting Text

Open Space

Recognizing rapidly increasing development pressures within the region, the City of Fairfield will preserve open space areas surrounding the city in order to maintain the community's sense of identity, natural setting, and quality of life. These open space preserves and buffers shall, when feasible, be acquired or preserved. They will serve to preserve the community character by protecting natural resources, offering recreational opportunities, and maintaining substantial amounts of open space land currently in economically productive uses. Rockville Hills Park has already been established and shall be maintained as a permanent recreational open space buffer.

The Fairfield General Plan identifies 11 Open Space Planning Areas (OSPA) on Exhibit OS-1. These areas are defined due to their geographic location, physical characteristics, development potential, and open space values or attributes. The rationale for designating land for OSPA purposes is explained below.

Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources

Primary economic uses of open space within the Fairfield Planning Area include agriculture and grazing, mineral extraction, and domestic water production. The preservation of agricultural resources, especially intensive row crops, grain production, orchards, and vineyards, is important to the economic vitality of the City and the region. Additionally, agriculture and its associated open space are essential to preserving regional heritage and contribute to the quality of life for residents in the county.

Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources

Natural Resources include waterways, natural habitat areas, wetlands, and geologic formations. These resource areas contribute to the character of the community and are valuable in their own right. Inundated by both urban development and agriculture over the past 150 years, remnant habitat areas have become scarcer and therefore take on a greater significance with the passage of time.

Open Space for Public Health and Safety

Unstable hillsides, flooding potential, and Travis AFB noise and safety impacts restrict development potential in many areas around Fairfield. Development in these areas will be strictly regulated or prohibited, with land most susceptible to hazards preserved as permanent open space.

Open Space for Public Recreation

The public is increasingly demanding passive natural recreational opportunities close to urban areas. Passive recreation includes activities such as walking and hiking, riding mountain bikes, bird watching, and picnicking. Often, these activities can be accommodated with public trails next to open space areas with limited public access.

Open Space to Shape Urban Growth

Fairfield and its neighboring cities face significant growth pressures. To preserve the city's individual character and to permanently preserve open space as a mitigation to continued development, buffer zones will be designated between Fairfield and its neighbors. These buffers will permanently define Fairfield's urban edges so that they do not abut development from adjoining cities.

Visual Open Space

Visual open space, particularly hillside areas and ridge tops, contributes greatly to the character of the city. Much of this land is currently used for livestock grazing. These uses should be maintained. Scenic road and parkways are also one of the most common ways people enjoy visual open space. Scenic roads should be designated and maintained to maximize appreciation of rural open space.

Open Space Planning Areas

Brief descriptions of the Open Space Planning Areas (OSPA) are presented below. Exhibit OS-1 graphically depicts these areas. More detailed descriptions of open space attributes, existing conditions, and current uses are presented in the Open Space, Conservation and Recreation section of the Technical Document (Volume II of this General Plan).

OSPA 1 - Benicia, Fairfield, Vallejo Buffer Zone

Generally located between the cities of Benicia, Fairfield, and Vallejo, this OSPA comprises approximately 10,000 acres of generally steep hills primarily used for cattle grazing. Portions of this area are within each of the three cities' spheres of influence. Preservation of these hills as open space is critical to maintaining a physical separation between the cities of Fairfield, Vallejo, and Benicia.

OSPA 2 - Lower Green Valley

Located north of Highway 12 and I-80, west of Rockville Hills Park, and south of Green Valley Falls, this OSPA includes Green Valley and the hills to the west of the valley.

OSPA 3 - Green Valley Falls/Vallejo Lakes

This OSPA is located to the northwest of Cordelia along the Solano-Napa county line. The area consists of two watersheds, one draining into Napa Valley and one draining into Green Valley. The terrain is mostly mountainous, rugged, and steep, with Sugarloaf Peak (elevation 1,686 feet) to the west and Twin Sisters (elevation 2,259 feet) in the eastern portion of the area.

OSPA 4 - Rockville Hills/Stoneridge

This OSPA is located north of the I-80/I-680 interchange and east of Green Valley. It encompasses approximately 2,600 acres of intermittently wooded, rocky, and hilly terrain. A central valley occupies approximately one-third of this area. Rockville Park is located in the southern portion. Prominent peaks are located in the northern portion of the area. Views in all directions, particularly to the east, are spectacular.

OSPA 5 AND 6 - Upper and Lower Suisun Valley

The Suisun Valley occupies approximately 20,000 acres of prime farm and crop land, separating central Fairfield and Cordelia. Suisun Valley defines the Fairfield community and sets it apart from other communities in the Bay Area. It is bounded by Rockville Hills to the west, Suisun Marsh to the south, the Fairfield city limit to the east, and the Napa county line to the north.

OSPA 7- Nelson Hill

This area includes approximately 240 acres lying northeast of Old Cordelia. It is contiguous to, but not incorporated in, the City of Fairfield. The highest point is slightly over 300 feet elevation, and sides are steeply sloped except for the portion facing the Cordelia commercial area. Nelson Hill is recognized as a visual buffer between Cordelia and other areas of the City, affording uniquely spectacular views of the Suisun Marsh to the south.

OSPA 8 - Rolling Hills

The Rolling Hills OSPA occupies approximately 4,000 acres north of Fairfield. The area consists of hilly, often wooded country. Much of it is used for grazing livestock. Portions of this area are within the city limits and are undergoing development, including the Rancho Solano and Rolling Hills projects. The Rolling Hills OSPA has some of the most attractive vistas from central Fairfield. The Rancho Solano North Master Plan Areas, which is described in the Land Use Element, is located in a portion of this OSPA.

OSPA 9 - Fairfield-Vacaville Greenbelt

This area includes the hills surrounding Lagoon Valley and a strip of land between the cities of Fairfield and Vacaville. Pursued jointly by the cities of Fairfield and Vacaville, a permanent open space buffer shall be established within the OSPA. The open space buffer shall be consistent with the Fairfield-Vacaville Study Committee Report and Recommendations of May 9, 1991 (included as an appendix to the General Plan).

OSPA 10 - Travis AFB/Jepson Prairie

This OSPA encompasses approximately 26 square miles, bounded by Travis Air Force Base, the proposed Fairfield-Vacaville greenbelt, State Route 113, Jepson Prairie's eastern and southern borders, and the Suisun Marsh Preservation Area. Most of the land is devoted to livestock grazing. This is essentially the same area recommended for establishment of a major ecological park in the 1982 Jepson Prairie Feasibility Study. The land is primarily flat to rolling grasslands containing numerous vernal pools and wetlands. It represents some the state's most significant examples of Central Valley Prairie.

OSPA 11 - Suisun Marsh

Located immediately south of Fairfield and Suisun City, Suisun Marsh is the largest continuous estuarine wetland in the United States. Occupying nearly 85,000 acres, the marsh is a vital wintering and breeding area for waterfowl. Strict federal and state regulations protect the wetlands and prohibit any new development or improvements which could degrade its quality. The Grizzly Island Wildlife Area and other State Department of Fish and Game lands are open to the public.

Open Space Commission

The Open Space Commission is charged with recommending to the Planning Commission, the Community Services Commission, the City Council, and other appropriate agencies the means by which to designate, preserve and protect agricultural, ecological, recreational and scenic lands in Fairfield and surrounding areas and to implement the General Plan Open Space and Conservation Element. A primary duty of the Open Space Commission is to review proposed development within the eleven Open Space Planning Areas for open space approval. The commission is comprised of five standing members and two advisory members.

Open Space Acquisition Mechanisms

The Open Space portion of this Element includes policies and programs regarding open space acquisition. Some methods for acquiring permanent open space are described below.

Pooled Development Rights Program

In a pooled development rights program, several landowners agree to consolidate their landholdings and develop the land under a master development plan. Development is clustered on the least sensitive portions of the site, preserving open space assets. Profits from the development are shared among all of the landowners, even those whose properties are largely set aside as open space.

Dedication of Open Space Land

For large scale development projects, the City requires developers to dedicate land for open space. Recent examples include the Rolling Hills, Rancho Solano, and Paradise Valley projects. For smaller scale projects, open space dedication is generally more difficult to accomplish. In those circumstances where dedication is not feasible, other techniques such as in-lieu fee payment and development rights pooling could be applied.

In-Lieu Fee Payment

During those occasions when it is not desirable or feasible to obtain dedications of open space lands, fees are collected from developers for open space acquisition. Collected revenues are placed into specific open space accounts for purchase of open space lands.

Conservation or Open Space Easement

A conservation or open space easement is a contract between a landowner and another party to hold the land in open space uses. In effect, the easement removes from the landowner the right to develop the land or otherwise interfere with the open space character of the land.

Open Space Funding Mechanisms

Following are potential funding programs that the City could utilize to implement the Open Space policies.

Bedroom Tax

This is a one-time City tax on new residential construction based on the number of bedrooms. Use of the revenue is restricted by City ordinance to funding construction of park and recreation facilities. A fee increase would require a two-thirds vote of the electorate, since this is a "special tax" under Proposition 13.

Mello-Roos District

State law permits the creation of Community Facilities Districts (CFD) which can sell bonds to finance a variety of community projects including the purchase of open space land. The bonds are repaid with an annual parcel tax. Mello-Roos CFD's require a two-thirds vote of the electorate, or a two-thirds vote of affected landowners in newly-developing portions of the City. Most CFD's are created at early stages of the development process by votes of the developers holding the land, and the cost of paying debt service on the bonds is borne by the residents who purchase homes in the districts.

Marks-Roos District

The Marks-Roos Local Bond Pooling Act of 1985 establishes the mechanism for local jurisdictions to create their own bond pools for financing a variety of public facilities. This program allows a more efficient pooling of funding resources, offering substantial savings in comparison to Mello-Roos funding alternatives. Marks-Roos funding is accomplished by forming a joint powers authority. City resolutions are passed for bond sale and expenditures.

Parcel Tax

The parcel tax is a citywide tax. A simple majority election is required if either tax revenues are deposited into the general fund or if the tax is imposed by a joint powers agreement. If the funds are to be specifically earmarked for open space, a two-thirds vote of the electorate is required.

Property Tax

The City may seek a two-thirds voter approval of a general obligation bond measure to fund open space acquisition and management. The bond issue amount is discretionary. Some advantages of this approach include that the City Council and the voters determine the level of funding, the tax is based on property value rather than a flat amount, and the cost of the funding is borne by both present and future property owners.

Municipal Park Improvement District

The Fairfield Municipal Park Improvement District (MPID) has authority to issue bonds for park improvements. The City Council requires bonds to be repaid by a revenue generating source related to the bond expenditure. For example, bonds authorized for the Rancho Solano golf course are being paid by greens fees. Since many types of open space do not generate revenue, the MPID is an appropriate funding source only in selected instances.

State Grants

Limited state funding is available on a case-by-case basis from the Coastal Conservancy, environmental license plate fund, and state park bond money. In some cases, local matching funds would be required for these grants. None of these constitute a stable revenue source.

Local Fund Raising

Local fund raising is limited in potential as a stable or sizable source. This would be most likely to be effective if a very popular site was to be acquired and a modest local matching contribution was required.

Conservation

The conservation portion of the Element addresses visual resources, natural resources such as wildlife habitats and air quality, and cultural and historic resources. These resources are discussed in detail in the Technical Document (Volume II of the General Plan). Following is a general discussion of existing resources in and around the City.

Wildlife and Vegetation

Fairfield is located within a region which has a wide variety of vegetative and wildlife habitats. Land use changes, introduction of detrimental agricultural chemicals, and competition from non-native species have led to the decline of many wildlife species in the area. The Fairfield Planning Area includes the following types of habitats: grassland, oak savanna, woodland, wetland, agricultural, and urban-industrial.

Creeks and Watershed Protection

The principal streams in the Fairfield area include Ledgewood, Pennsylvania Avenue, Union Avenue, Laurel, McCoy, Green Valley, Dan Wilson, Suisun, Jameson Canyon and American Canyon Creeks (see Public Facilities and Services Element Exhibit PF-4). The continued and uninterrupted flow of these streams is vital to maintaining the Suisun Marsh environment.

Although Suisun Marsh is not located within Fairfield's City limits, its value as an open space and water resource is of considerable significance to the City and the region. It is one of the largest contiguous brackish marshes in the United States and constitutes over 10% of California's remaining wetlands. A major wintering ground for waterfowl of the Pacific Flyway, the marsh provides feeding and resting areas for up to 28% of California's waterfowl during the autumn of low rainfall years. The principal authorities protecting the marsh are the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) and the State Department of Fish and Game (DFG).

Archaeological, Historical, and Cultural Resources

While there has been no comprehensive inventory of archaeological resources within the planning area, individual surveys conducted during environmental review of development projects have identified several important archaeological sites associated with the Patwin era. The Patwins were a small tribe of hunter-gatherers concentrated in villages along local creeks, particularly in Green Valley. Surveyed archaeological sites have included middens, burial grounds, and village sites.

In 1976-77, the Central Solano County Cultural Heritage Commission conducted a survey of historic buildings and features in central Solano County. The study identified many significant historic sites in the City of Fairfield. Most of these are single-family homes located in areas that were originally residential neighborhoods. Other nonresidential structures chosen for their historical significance include the Solano County Courthouse, the water tower on Texas Street and the old post office. The historical town of Cement located in the northern part of the planning area, contains a number of structures related to the Pacific Portland Cement Company Factory. Old Town Cordelia also contains a collection of historical structures.

The City of Fairfield offers a broad range of cultural activities for all age groups. There are a variety of facilities available for these activities, including the Fairfield Center for the Creative Arts, the Fairfield Community Center, the Fairfield Senior Center, various school facilities, and the Fairfield/Suisun Library.

Resource Conservation

Resource conservation issues addressed by the General Plan include waste management, energy, water, and air quality.

The City will address solid waste diversion and disposal through the Source Reduction and Recycling Element (not an element of the General Plan, but a separate document) mandated by the California Integrated Waste Management Act of 1989. This bill requires each city to divert 25% and 50% of its waste from going to the landfill by the years 1995 and 2000, respectively. The City has already initiated a curbside recycling program. Waste management is also discussed in the Public Facilities and Services Element.

The City has developed a water system that will provide non-potable irrigation water for areas such as parks, median strips, schools and streetscapes. This system will save the City energy, as water which previously went through the treatment and purification process can now be delivered to areas which do not actually require potable water. Please refer to the Public Facilities and Services Element for further discussion of the City's water system.

Energy can be either renewable or nonrenewable. Renewable resources are those whose supply is unlimited or can be replenished. This includes solar, wind, hydroelectric and geothermal energy resources. Nonrenewable resources are

those which are limited in supply and which may eventually be depleted. These include water, oil, gas and nuclear power.

The City is located within the Bay Area Air Quality Management District (AQMD) and must comply with state-mandated plans adopted by the district. In general, Fairfield air quality meets national and state standards, except for occasional violations of ozone and carbon monoxide standards. The land use and growth decisions of the City have a profound effect on the ability to combat air pollution. The land use, economic development, and circulation policies included in the General Plan all influence air quality.

Mineral Resources

The Planning Area includes two currently inactive quarries, Nelson Hill and Cement Hill, which were used for construction aggregate. There are abandoned limestone quarries on the western and southern slopes of Cement Hill. Scattered petroleum and natural gas wells have been drilled in the vicinity of Fairfield. (See Exhibit OS-2.)

Agricultural Soils Resources

In the Fairfield Planning Area, the well-drained soils of Suisun Valley and parts of Green Valley are considered to be prime farmland. Most of the hillside country west and north of Fairfield is grazing land. Grazing land also exists in the flat lands north of Travis Air Force Base. The Land Use Element includes two Agricultural Land Use Categories, intensive and extensive agriculture. Intensive agricultural lands are those which have the potential for the highest productive yield and are used for row crops and orchards. Extensive agricultural lands have a relatively lower productive yield and are primarily used for grazing.

Recreation

The recreation portion of the element primarily addresses outdoor recreation. There are currently thirteen neighborhood and two community parks within the City. In addition, Rockville Hills Park provides a regional facility adjacent to the City limits in the Cordelia Area. The City has two public golf courses, Rancho Solano and Paradise Valley. The City has also completed more than five miles of the linear park. Existing recreation is mapped on Exhibit OS-3.

The Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element includes standards for the development of future neighborhood and community parks (Policies OS 12.3 and OS 12.4). These standards were developed by the Fairfield Recreation Commission in 1979.